

LAS VEGAS TELLS ABOUT CUBA SUGAR PLANTATION

F. Meredith Jones, a Las Vegas man, who holds an important and responsible position in the timber department of the Santa Fe railway, has written The Optic from Santiago de Cuba, where he now is on company business. Mr. Jones gives a most interesting description of a sugar plantation on the island, which is republished, herewith. The communication reads:

A Modern Sugar Plantation
Santiago de Cuba, May 31, 1909.
Immediately following the close of the Spanish-American war, there was organized in New York the Cape Cruz Co. for the purpose of starting and conducting the sugar producing business on the south coast of Cuba, in the present Province of Oriente. Accordingly, about the end of 1903, the engines of a great sugar mill were started at what is known as Ensenada de Mora, a point on the south coast, 90 miles west of Santiago.

A entirely new location had been selected. It was in the virgin forest, on the flat lands between the mountains and the sea. The first crop was no small affair, but it was very much lighter than the sixth, the harvesting of which is just now complete. The product for this year is 86,000 bags of sugar (14,000 tons), and 170,000 gallons of molasses. The sugar is all graded to 96 degrees polarization. It is shipped away in bags as rapidly as possible. However, the molasses is retained in large tanks, to be worked over next season, when more sugar may be extracted. The refuse molasses is finally sent off in tank steamers, and sold at about 3 1/2 cents a gallon.

Company Whole Thing
The company owns the entire property, which is a land grant of something like 60,000 acres, called a finca. It includes all the land between the sea and the crest of the mountains for a distance of fifteen miles. There are no stores, shops or any kind of business except that which is conducted by the sugar company. Furthermore, there is no surrounding country. The sea is on one side, while a rough and rugged mountain range bounds the other.

The labor is brought in from other parts. It consists of Americans, Cubans and Jamaica negroes. There are about fifty skilled Americans. Mostly heads of departments and foremen at salaries of \$200 a month and up. There are about as many skilled Cubans, but their position and salary is much below that of the American. The total number of employees is 800 during the mill run and 400 during the growing season. The common labor as far as possible is let by task or contract. Even the regular weekly clean-up of the mill is contract work. Also the planting, cutting and handling of the cane. It is said that a good man earns from \$2 to \$2.50 a day cutting cane.

Labor Saving Devices
Everything possible is done by machinery. A 30-inch gauge railroad extends to all the cane fields. A carload of cane is lifted by a movable crane and dumped into a conveyor leading to the crusher. The cane goes through three sets of rollers in succession and thence by conveyor and mechanical stoker to the steam boilers where it is used for fuel. The mill has a capacity of 1,000 tons of cane a day, and this has been increased by crowding to 1,100 tons. It runs almost continuously, day and night, from November to May. The mill-men work in 6-hour shifts. The sugar boilers watch the thermometer

and the crystallization, and draw a salary of \$416 a month gold.

In connection with this mill, there is a double system of waterworks, fresh and salt water; a double light plant, gas and electricity; ice plant; and a large and well regulated machine and general repair shop.

Store Makes Fortune
Another thing connected with this enterprise is the store department. The sales, during the milling season, run from \$600 to \$1,000 a day. For the year just closing the store shows a net profit of \$70,000. The clean profit of the entire enterprise including the store is \$36,000. Equal to 4 per cent on a capital of \$9,000,000. The entire expenditure is said to have been less than \$2,000,000.

Five thousand four hundred acres are now planted to cane, and 600 acres are added each year. Clearing costs about \$25 an acre. The products of the clearings are used as fuel to supplement the cane refuse under the mill boilers. Also to furnish ties and other timber for the railroad.

Employees Well Treated
The employees are treated well and seem to be satisfied. The men are paid in cash weekly, if they wish to draw it; and, although the profits of the store are very large, the goods are not unreasonably high.

The American employees mostly go to the states for a few months, while the mill is shut down during the summer.

A sewer system is connected with the mill and village. Also a hospital with an attending physician. So far not much use has been made of the hospital. The climate seems both pleasant and healthful.

Ensenada de Mora is the only port and postoffice between Santiago and Manzanillo, a distance of about 150 miles. A coast line steamer makes a trip each way once a week.

F. MEREDITH JONES.

CIMARRON ENJOYING BUILDING BOOM

(Special Correspondence.)
Cimarron, N. M., July 12.—The nearest approach to a boom that Cimarron has had for years is now on here. While it is not in the strict sense a boom, as the word is popularly used, still it is such a revival in building as to almost amount to a boom.

In addition to the bank building that is in the course of erection, the Cimarron Mercantile Co., now correctly called the Brooks Mercantile Co., is building a big store building west of the postoffice. The Cimarron Construction company has just completed its office building. The Masons are contemplating the construction of a two-story office building, the lower floor of which will probably be used as a store building. The Rocky Mountain railway will build a new freight house here, and the Methodists are trying to raise the funds, with every chance for success, for the erection of a new church, that will be ample for the growing needs of the church. F. W. Brooks is building a fine stone residence building, C. O. Pease and W. S. Kilpatrick are both building modern residences of brick and stone. Pease and Kilpatrick are building five five-room houses for rent, the first two being already started; A. C. Cox will build in the very near future four or five houses to rent, and C. O. Pease will do the same within a few weeks.

Besides the above there are more

buildings contemplated for the near future, and taking it all in all, there is every reason to believe that this season will almost double the number of structures raised last year. Cimarron is still on the map and is there strong.

\$9,000,000 EXPENDED TO RECLAIM ARID LANDS

Washington, July 12.—The reclamation service reports that the increase in the reclamation fund from sales of public land during the fiscal year ended June 30, 1909 was \$7,770,000 and that \$1,000,000 has also accrued to the fund through repayment of reservoir construction charges. Existing contracts and liabilities on unpaid accounts will absorb all of amount available in the reclamation fund, and plans are being made to utilize the funds which will be available for 1910.

These plans will be submitted to Secretary Ballinger after a conference of the engineers of the reclamation service at Portland this month.

A. C. Campbell of New Mexico, who is an assistant attorney in the department of justice, has declined the proposition of chief legal officer for the reclamation service, recently offered him by Secretary Ballinger.

BEN ROMERO'S DEATH RESULT OF ACCIDENT

According to the Denver Post, the death of Ben Romero, formerly of Las Vegas, which occurred in that city Friday night last, was due to a peculiar accident. The Post gives the following particulars:

As the result of a most unusual accident, Benjamin Romero, aged 42, came to his death last night. He was a wall-cleaner and with a fellow workman, was cleaning the walls and ceiling of the Elite cafe, 1624 Stout street.

He was standing on one end of a scaffolding which rested on two tall ladder-trestles. His companion was on the other end.

Romero reached far beyond the end of the scaffolding and upward, in an endeavor to wash a spot on the cornice moulding.

But the pressure backward pushed the supporting ladders until they closed up and the staging fell and Romero and the other workman with it. Romero's head struck the tiled floor and his skull was fractured.

The police ambulance was called and the injured man was taken to the county hospital where he died without regaining consciousness.

The accident occurred shortly after 6 o'clock last night, the men having returned after supper to finish the job.

Benjamin Romero resided at 1431 28th street. He leaves a wife and four children, the eldest being a girl of 13. He had lived in Denver about five years, having come from the place of his nativity, Las Vegas, N. M. He was a member of a prominent family. His widow also is connected with one of New Mexico's best families.

She is the niece of the late Francisco Chavez, the brave sheriff of Santa Fe county for whose murder four members of a gang of conspirators were hanged after the president of the United States had twice granted respites. Her sister is the wife of Joseph Lacombe, proprietor of the Claire hotel at Santa Fe.

ALBUQUERQUE TO LET SEWER CONTRACT TODAY

Sixteen bids for the construction of a \$300,000 sewer system in Albuquerque were submitted to the city council there last Saturday, each one of the bidders being represented personally by an engineer. The Duke city engineer spent Saturday and yesterday examining the various bids and expected to announce the successful bidder sometime today. Among the bidders on the system were the following:

T. J. Shea of New Orleans; Glass and Fischer of Bakersfield, Calif.; Dearborn and Jackson, of Cedar Rapids, Iowa; A. L. Peterson of Georgia; Seeler Brothers of Denver; E. M. Love, of Corry, Pa.; Thomas Sweeney & Co., of Pittsburg, Pa.; J. D. Hanley Contracting company of Salt Lake, Utah; C. A. Spier, of Colorado Springs; Ripley and Haselman, of Pueblo; S. M. Kearns of Kansas City; H. S. Moore of Albuquerque; W. W. Cook & Sons, of Holly, Colo.; Fisher & Dempsey Contracting company of Pueblo, Luisdrie & Gordon of Canon City, Colo.; and James Ferry & Sons of Charleston, W. Va.

AVERSE TO CHANGE

ARABS CLING CLOSELY TO CUSTOMS OF THE PAST.

Norman Duncan Describes Interview with Leader Which Well Reveals Attitude of the People of the Desert.

The sheikh's young son came in, curiosity having got the better of his shyness at last; he sidled confidently to his father, and was there embraced (in the way of these Arab fathers); presently he had snuggled close to his father's feet, and was become one of our company, writes Norman Duncan in Harper's. I inquired then, in a blundering way concerning the boy's education—would he be sent to the schools in Cairo?

"He was born here," was the answer.

"What matter?"

"He will then truly live here."

"It is the custom of the western fathers," I ventured, "to advance their sons above themselves."

"How may this be done?" he asked.

"It is said," I replied, "that the education of the schools promotes it."

"If I send my son away to the schools," he answered, like a man who had pondered much upon the problem and become resolved, "I shall accomplish his ruin. If I send him away he will either remain away or return; if he remain, he will be forever unhappy, having been born to the freedom of this airy desert; if he return, he will be forever unhappy also, having tasted indulgence, having been corrupted by the luxury of the city. Now, if I send my son away to the schools, and if he remain away, he will either succeed or fail in life. But how, born in this desert, shall he succeed, being forever at a disadvantage in an alien place? If he succeed, what shall compensate him for the stress and confinement he must suffer? He must live in a room; but how shall he endure to live in a room? And if he fail, what then shall become of him? I will keep my son with his tribesmen in the sand, that he may be strong and courageous and free. Here we dwell content, cultivating our few dates, raising our flocks in peace, exchanging our poor wealth for the corn and cloth of other places, so satisfying all our simple needs. What shall a man want more than his freedom? We are oppressed neither by labor nor wicked men; and we live in our own place, according to the will of God."

"You are, then, content with the life you have lived?"

"It is so."

"And would live it over again, deed for deed, day by day, as you have lived it, since the beginning?"

"Truly, khawaja!"

My question had never before been answered in this way. I was amazed.

"What is the explanation of your contentment?" I demanded.

He looked up bewildered.

"Why, I repeated, 'are you content?'"

"God willing," he replied, enlightened, "I will answer your question; I live where I was born."

Grooming.

Anciently man thought more highly of his horse than of his women kind. But woman, as it chanced, was crafty.

"Why does he esteem his horse beyond his wife?" she asked herself, and resolutely faced the task of finding out.

Her first answer was: "The horse will carry a heavier load."

Her next: "The horse doesn't talk back at him."

But neither of these, somehow, impressed her as being correct.

"Most likely," she declared, at length, "it's in the grooming. Well, I'll just be well groomed myself and see."

It was a lucky guess, and from that time forward woman's position rose, relatively, until in our day the horse has scarcely a look-in, even at the horse show.—Puck.

Born in Overcoats.

In his fur-lined coat the explorer shivered.

"The Terra del Fuegan is born in an overcoat," he said. "That is a fact. The Terra del Fuegan will sleep naked calmly and happily, in a snowdrift."

"His climate is the worst, the very worst, in the world. All the year round hail and rain fall on him save during the winter season, when it snows. He trots about his business nude and content in the downpour, and you shiver to see the little mounds of snow on his bare shoulders slowly melting."

"This poor soap-eating savage is born in an overcoat, and cold can't penetrate his leather hide."

Its Best Part.

The flying machine agent spoke bitterly.

"See here," he said, "our bill for that monoplane has been running six months now."

"Good!" the aviator retorted in cold accents. "I am glad there is something connected with that machine that will run for more than 15 minutes."

From His Pa's Folks.

"She doesn't know where the baby gets his und temper from."

"She doesn't?"

"No."

"That's strange. Most young mothers can place that sort of responsibility in a trice."

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